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Message Text

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16
ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-10

LAB-06 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 IO-15 DOTE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 L-03 NSC-10 PA-03 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15

USIA-15 ACDA-19 DRC-01 /168 W
---------- 026427
R 051520Z OCT 73
FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2995
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMCONSUL DURBAN

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, SF
SUBJ: COMMENT ON SIGNIFICANCE OF VORSTER'S SPEECH AT ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF MOTOR INDUSTRIES FEDERATION IN CAPE TOWN OCTOBER 4, 1973

REF: CAPE TOWN 643

1. SIGNIFICANCE LIES NOT SO MUCH IN WHAT VORSTER SAID ON THIS OCCASION (CAPE TOWN'S 643)--SINCE LOWER-ECHELON SAG OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN MAKING SIMILAR STATEMENTS (AT LEAST OUT OF ONE SIDE OF THEIR MOUTHS)FOR MONTHS-- BUT IN FACT VORSTER HIMSELF HAS FINALLY TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF APPROPRIATE OPPORTUNITY TO ENDORSE SAG'S "TRIAL BALLOON"LINE (JOHANNESBURG'S A-40, MAY 18) THAT PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPROVING PRODUCTIVITY, WAGES AND WORKING CONDITIONS OF URBAN AFRICANS RESTS--INABSENCE OF LEGAL RESTRICTIONS--NOT WITH GOVERNMENT BUT WITH EMPLOYERS AND TRADE UNIONS.

2. SPECULATION IS THAT VORSTER CHOSE MOTOR INDUSTRIES FEDERATION CONFERENCE AS VENUE FOR SPEECH BECAUSE CONFERENCE WAS SCHEDULED
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TO TAKE PLACE JUST DAYS PRIOR TO ARRIVAL OF BRITISH TUC DELEGATION

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EXPECTED TO BE HIGHLY CRITICAL OF SAG LABOR POLICIES AND BECAUSE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY IS FOREMOST AMONG S.A. INDUSTRIES MOST SERIOUSLY PLAGUED BY SHORTAGES OF SKILLED LABOR (EXACERBATED BY REFUSAL OF 20,000 MEMBER WHITE MOTOR INDUSTRY EMPLOYEES' UNION TO ACCEPT OR TRAIN BLACK APPRENTICES). FACT THAT VORSTER ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITY FOR HELPING TO FACILITATE "ORDERLY CHANGE" TO TRADE UNIONS AS WELL AS TO EMPLOYERS INDICATES HE IS WELL AWARE OF ROLE WHITE UNIONS HAVE BEEN PLAYING FOR YEARS IN PREVENTING BETTER TRAINING AND ADVANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR BLACKS AND THAT HE NOW WANTS AND EXPECTS CERTAIN UNIONS TO TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT THEIR POLICIES.

3. PRESS REPORTS INDICATE REACTIONS FROM BOTH EMPLOYERS AND TRADE UNION LEADERS TO VORSTER SPEECH & TO PARALLLEL REMARKS MADE SAME EVENING AT FEDERATED CHAMBER OF INDUSTRY BANQUET IN JOHANNESBURG BY LABOUR MINISTER BILJOEN WERE GENERALLY VERY FAVORABLE.

4. WHETHER SAG WILLING TO ADMIT IT OR NOT NEW LINE REPRESENTS DRAMATIC DEPARTURE FROM LONG-HELD PREVIOUS POSITION IN WHICH SUCH SHIBBOLETHS AS "JOB RESERVATION" CONSIDERED ABSOLUTELY SACROSANCT. WHILE VILJOEN REFUSED TO TURN HIS BACK ON "JOB RESERVATION" IN SO MANY WORDS IN POST-SPEECH INTERVIEW WITH DIE VADERLAND IT IS DIFFICULT TO DISAGREE WITH OBSERVATION RAND DAILY MAIL MADE IN LEAD EDITORIAL OCTOBER 5 THAT VORSTER'S SPEECH MEANS SAG NOW REALIZED INTER ALIA "THAT JOB APARTHEID IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH AN EXPANDING ECONOMY." IN ANY CASE GIVEN OTHER RECENT SAG INITIATIVES HAVING TO DO WITH STATUS OF "TEMPORARY, PERMANENT" URBAN AFRICAN E.G. INDERDEPARTMENTAL VAN ZYL COMMITTEE ON TRAINING AFRICAN WORKERS, NEW LABOR LEGIS-LATION AND BANTU ADMINISTRATION BOARDS, QUESTION WAS NOT SO MUCH WHETHER VORSTER WOULD PUBLICLY ENDORSE WHAT SAG HAS DECIDED MUST BE DONE AS WHEN HE WOULD CHOSE TO DO IT.
DE GRACE

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